



**Public Works**

# Kaleidoscope

A REFLECTION OF DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC WORKS

SPRING 2014

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## Act Locally, Eat Globally

**Neil Bjorklund**

It was Y2K, the much-feared millennial year, when computers were supposed to go haywire and bring the global economy to a screeching halt, maybe ending civilization as we knew it. It happened in a small, unassuming kitchen, tucked away in south Eugene.

There, a small group of friends met and hatched a plan to change how they participated in international relations—a local intervention in a global arena. It was the birth of a movement, a bold stroke of local genius that would change the lives of an entire generation.

Okay, maybe that was a small exaggeration. But that did sound exciting, didn't it? What was actually birthed in that south Eugene kitchen in 2000 was a small,

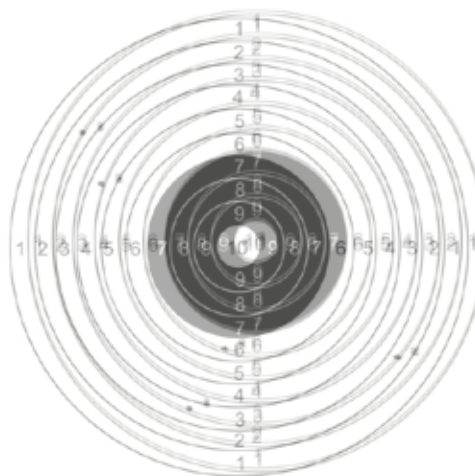
Eat Globally continued on page 2



## Shooting Blind

**John Huberd**

In 2011 the State of Iowa changed the gun permit rules, allowing visually impaired people to carry firearms in public. "State law does not allow sheriffs to deny an Iowan the right to carry a weapon based on physical ability," the Des Moines Register reported. This has led to an ongoing debate concerning the gun rights of disabled people versus public safety issues. Some law enforcement officials have expressed



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*Diversity in Public Works*

*Kaleidoscope is published by the City of Eugene Public Works Diversity Committee for the employees of Public Works*

but shared gesture by a group of people who understood that they were part of a large and diverse humanity. They started an international potluck group.

Here's how it works. The group meets two to four times a year. At the end of each meal, a globe or atlas is brought out, and one of the youngest in the group blindly points to the map, randomly identifying the next location. A date is picked, and a host. In the early days of the group, the cooks scoured cookbooks for recipes, but now the internet is the recipe resource of choice.

As the date nears, cooks pick their dishes and email the rest of the group, mostly to avoid duplication, and the different elements of the meal emerge. On the evening of the event, all the food is placed on a central table. With this group, and its accomplished cooks, this is always a diverse and tantalizing spread. With all 15-18 participants encircling the buffet, each of the cooks explains their dishes and the traditions attached to them. Sometimes, the authentic ingredients aren't available, so the cook explains what those were, and the substitutions made.

On occasion, a foreign visitor is on hand, sometimes from the cultural region chosen for the evening, and many conversations ensue as people satisfy their curiosity about their part of the world. Sometimes, one or more of the group members has visited the region, and shares photos, stories, music, clothing or artwork.

Every one of these gatherings has been highly enjoyable and educational. The tangible experience of food brings us just a little closer to the people in another part of the world. Sometimes, the experience inspires members of the group to go visit that place and experience it for themselves. So maybe it *is* citizen diplomacy, on a very small scale. Thirteen years later, we are still meeting, and sharing food, drink, stories and traditions from cultures around the world. Next up is Turkey (no, not the bird).

Countries "visited" include Botswana, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, India, Italy, Jamaica, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, United States, and Zimbabwe.

concerns. "I'm not an expert in vision," Delaware Sheriff John LeClere says. "At what point do vision problems have a detrimental effect to fire a firearm? If you see nothing but a blurry mass in front of you, then I would say you probably shouldn't be shooting something."

Other advocates say that not allowing vision impaired people to carry guns would violate the Americans with Disabilities Act. National Public Radio reported that one man has taught his 18-year-old blind daughter how to shoot. An online video shows her handling a gun and using muscle memory to aim. The training has resulted in her being fairly accurate at hitting targets. An 84-year-old man was also quoted in the Register saying, "It shows we're like anyone else and we don't want to be left behind." Here's my advice. If you are in Iowa and meet a sight impaired person carrying a gun, be nice to them.

### Assistive Technology for Paralympians Includes Infrared-Beam Rifles

A laser-based shooting system is specially designed for blind and visually impaired persons, including biathletes. The rifle scope fires an infrared beam that system software converts into sound. Through headphones wired to a computer, the shooter aims and listens for beeps and tones that change as the light traverses the target. Beeps quicken and become continuous and higher pitched the closer the beam is to the bull's eye.

Blind biathletes use the technology in most international competitions, including the Winter Paralympic Games. Learn more at <http://www.sochi2014.com/en/paralympic> Or learn about other ways technology is making recreation more accessible at: <http://assistivetechology.about.com/od/ATCAT1/tp/Assistive-Sports-Technology-For-Persons-Who-Are-Blind.htm>

—ed.

# Public Works Around the World!

**Trevor Taylor (POS)** and his wife spent one week in Roatan, Honduras recently, celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary (Congratulations!!). This was their first trip to Honduras. When asked what his favorite part about the vacation was, he replied, “We especially enjoyed long walks on the beach, snorkeling one of the most robust healthy reef systems in the Caribbean, soaking up the tropical heat, and reconnecting with each other from the never-ending domestic and parenting responsibilities that keep them busy in Eugene.”



**Bob Blanchard (POS)**, and his wife Debbie traveled to Japan last July with the Eugene-Kakegawa Sister City Committee. The delegation visited Kyoto, Nara, Kakegawa, and Tokyo over 11 days. They enjoyed visiting ancient temples and shrines, riding the Shinkansen bullet train, staying overnight at a Buddhist monastery, seeing Geisha ladies in full costume, and attending the annual Kakegawa Festival.

Bob and Debbie spent an additional five days in Japan, as Debbie was born and raised in Okinawa. They set out on their own to Lake Nojiri where Debbie’s family spent many summers when she was a child, and drove to see the Japanese “snow monkeys”— so-called because they live near a natural onsen (spa) and are often photographed basking in the warm water in the snow.



**Shade Nelson (PWM/POS)** and **Chris McVay (ISD)** explored the joys of tea in England, the lights of Paris by night, and sheep munching four leaf clovers in Ireland. These are just a few of the tastes, sights and sounds that the two experienced last year on their September trip to Europe. Shade relished visiting the art museums, Shakespeare and Co., and the cute Bohemian apartment three stories up looking over the river Thames. Visiting Monet’s Garden was another highlight. Chris had his camera clicking

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*Sunset on the island of Roatan in Honduras*



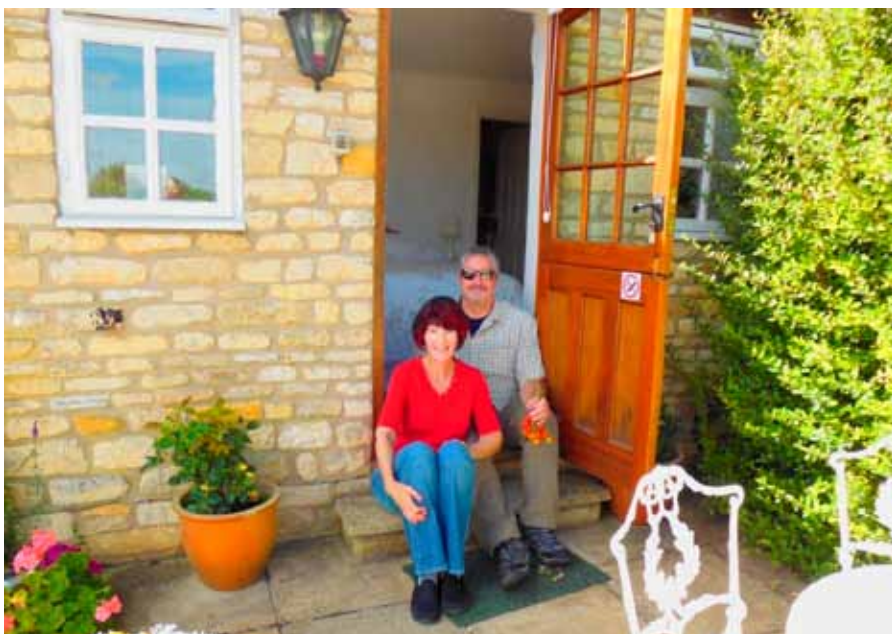
*Japanese purification fountain at Kiyomizu-dera Temple in Kyoto*

*Would you like your photos shared in Kaleidoscope? Tell us about your adventures across town or around the globe! Please send your photos and a brief description to Julie Schafer at PWM/POS (x4966) for inclusion in a future edition of Kaleidoscope.*



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in every direction to take in the incredible architecture and views; the golden Cotswold cottages, meandering country paths, all of historical Paris, and old stone churches with beautiful stained glass and leaning tombstones. And last but not least: a marriage proposal on a riverboat dinner cruise under the lights of the Eiffel Tower. Congratulations Shade and Chris!



*Shade and Chris at the Little Broom in Stow-on-the-Wold, Cotswolds, England*

## Free Activities for a Cool Summer

Summer is a great time to get out and enjoy art and music from a variety of cultures and styles. See something new! The following free events take place at museums, arts centers and parks. Go to Travel Lane County's web site for a complete calendar of entertainment and learning opportunities in our region. Here is a sampling to consider, from marimba to modern art:

**Art & Culture Weekend, June 14 & 15, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History, 1680 E 15th Ave, Eugene. Phone: 541.346.3024

One campus, two museums, free entry! In celebration of University of Oregon Commencement, the Museum of Natural and Cultural History and the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art offer complimentary admission to graduates, families and friends throughout the weekend.

**Ukrainian Day, June 28 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. performances**

Nativity of the Mother of God — Ukrainian Catholic Church, 704 Aspen St, Springfield  
Phone: 541.726.7309

Veselka, Springfield's own Ukrainian dance troupe, will perform two shows! Bring blankets and enjoy a picnic-like, family-friendly atmosphere. Ukrainian style dishes will be available for purchase. Baked goods, coffee and soft drinks will also be served. Vitayemo! Welcome! Donations will be graciously accepted.

**On the House: Pius Cheung, Marimba** — Oregon Bach Festival, July 1, 1 p.m., Hult Center for the Performing Arts Lobby

Enjoy internationally renowned marimba artist Pius Cheung's deeply expressive performance, a free musical event in celebration of the Oregon Bach Festival (OBF). Visit the OBF website for details.

**On the House: British Columbia Girls Choir** — Oregon Bach Festival, July 12, 1 p.m., Hult Center for the Performing Arts Lobby

Enjoy this complimentary soundscape from the world-touring British Columbia Girls Choir as they enchant with harmonies and melodies to remember. Visit the Oregon Bach Festival website for details on this free event.

*continued...*

# Diversity in the workplace—14 years later

Eric Johnson

Recently, I began developing a hiring process for a vacant position in my work section. As part of most hiring processes, both supplemental and interview questions are required in order to help fairly evaluate applicants and candidates who are invited in for the interview process.

A typical posting includes several supplemental questions geared to narrow down the dozens, if not hundreds, of applications received for any given position. Additionally, interview questions are drafted for one or more panels that provide the hiring supervisor an insight into the candidates he/she is considering.

Before creating a set of questions to be used in the process, I looked back at some of the hiring processes I've been involved in to look for questions that would be appropriate for this particular posting. For this process I was focusing my questions on leadership skills, management styles, construction background, fit and diversity.

As I sifted through dozens of examples, I came upon my original application and supplemental questions from 1999. In reading through my answers to the six questions asked, I became interested in my answer to

a question pertaining to diversity in the workplace. My first thought was "Wow, that's not how I would answer that question now". Now with that said, my answer 14 years ago wasn't terrible, but I'm sure it didn't help boost my overall score.

So what's changed in the past 14 years that would make me want to change my response? Does it have to do with the diversity trainings I've attended over the years, a speaker I've heard on this subject, one or more articles I've read on diversity, committees I've been a part of, or just the everyday experience I've had during my employment with the City? Not really sure, but more than likely it's been a combination of all above that has enlightened and broadened my view and understanding of diversity in the workplace. And over the next several years, will my answer to diversity in the workplace once again change if asked to answer this same question? My guess is yes because I realize now that there are numerous opportunities to broaden my knowledge on diversity. And I also realize that most of those opportunities will come in ways that are subtle enough that I may not notice that my views and understanding of diversity are changing.

So if you have a copy of your original job application, see if a question relating to diversity was asked. If so, ask yourself if your answer to that question would be different today than it was then. If so, why?

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**Oakridge Ukulele Festival, August 1-3**

Oakridge Lodge & Guest House, 48175 E 1st St, Oakridge, Phone: 541.782.4000

The 4th Annual Festival features classes, jam sessions, instructor performances, open mic and a vendors marketplace. In the Uptown Neighborhood of Oakridge, group of nationally acclaimed instructors will teach 22 workshops (prices vary) over the course of the weekend.

**Eugene/Springfield Pride Day, August 9**

Location: Alton Baker Park

A safe place for celebrating local diversity with food and entertainment. Enjoy live music, vendors, craft beers and lots of activities to engage and enlighten.



*Many free events give you opportunities to hear music from other places and cultures.*

Have you seen one too many  
**cute kitties** or quirky dance videos and  
vowed never to waste time on **social media**  
again? Before you pull the plug,  
**check out Upworthy.com**

Upworthy calls itself “social media with a mission: to make important stuff as viral as a video of some idiot surfing off of his roof.” Their team of media reviewers reviews submissions of videos—many less than five minutes in length—that tell stories about the real world we live in. Many different worlds, actually. Videos about the economy, the environment, discrimination, diversity, poverty, pop culture and religion (and that’s a short list). When Upworthy’s editors find something that is powerful and presented well, they fact check the content, give the item a descriptive headline, and post the best of the best. You can search by category or keywords to find content that interests you.

Think of Upworthy as a video newspaper where you can learn something new—or gain a new perspective—in a format that is easy to absorb and share. Some stories reach out through humor, others may get you all choked up. Others are difficult to watch because of what they reveal. But if you find yourself in front of a computer and bored with the latest viral pet video, or get assigned to bring a diversity topic for your next team meeting, try Upworthy as a short cut to content that will use your time wisely and engage your mind.

—ed.

## PWDC MISSION STATEMENT

*The City of Eugene Public Works Department is committed to fostering understanding, communication and respect among all members in the department.*

*We believe in a department that is accepting of everyone so that we capitalize on the strengths emanating from our differences.*

*By drawing on our individual strengths, we believe we can create an optimum and respectful workplace, one that can attract and retain a diverse workforce, allowing us to serve the community from which we come more effectively.*

*We believe that an inclusive diversity program is pivotal to reaching our professional potential, both individually and collectively.*

### GOAL

*The goal of the PW Diversity Committee is to promote a workplace free of harassment and discrimination. We recognize and respect diverse viewpoints, cultures, and life experiences.*

*Kaleidoscope is about all of us! If you have an adventure, story, book, movie, or other topic that relates to your understanding of culture and the diverse world we live in, write a few paragraphs about it and send it in so we can include it in our next issue.*

**PWDiversity@ci.eugene.or.us**

